



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0881NC-1 for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Charlotte-Mecklenburg School (CMS) has articulated a comprehensive and clear vision that can serve as the foundation for accelerating student learning, deepening student learning, and increasing equity. The use of four projects (Project 1: Ensuring effective and efficient management of the initiative; Project 2: Exploring four proven approaches across all 27 schools that extend the impact of highly effective teachers; Project 3: Piloting new ways of middle school math instruction via teacher teaming, reconfigured learning spaces, and use of adaptive digital tools in 4 of the 27 schools; Project 4: Revamping school and community systems to further strengthen personalization for students in the Harding feeder pattern by expanding a Wraparound School Community model), as described in the application, is ambitious but appropriate. Overall, this places CMS at the top of high range.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	9
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools describes an adequate process that was used to select participant schools. A list of schools that will participate in grant activities is included in the application—as well the total number of participating students.</p> <p>The data provided about low income and high needs students was confusing. The applicant reported the number of low income students and the number of high needs students as being identical for all participating schools. This seems unlikely—there probably are some students with disabilities, ELs, etc. who would meet the definition of high needs, but are not low income.</p> <p>Overall, this places CMS in the middle of the high range. While overall the process is well described-- the description of selection process for some high need students was ambiguous.</p>		
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools includes a high-quality plan that describes how the reform proposal will be scaled up. It includes a detailed logic model in its application that includes goals, rationale, inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes. The logic model is comprehensive and will help the applicant reach its outcome goals. Overall, this places CMS at the top of the high range.</p>		
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	5
<p>(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools provides some information about LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes, but relatively few relevant details are provided.. The Applicant describes the ESEA flexibility waiver which North Carolina received—and suggests that these changes in the federal accountability system will affect the targets that CMS will need to meet. However, the Applicant does not sufficiently explain the relationship between the flexibility waivers and the LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes. The Applicant also provides insufficient detail about some of the goals (for example, for Cohort Graduation Rate). Overall the Applicant scores in the middle of the mid-range, since few CMS specific details are provided.</p>		

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score

(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	12
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools describes numerous examples of advancing student learning and achievement, and increasing equity, over the four-year period. Since detailed data were not included it was impossible to tell if students did better at some grade levels than others—or whether the trend has been consistently upward across years—or if there were downticks some years. The application also did not provide information for Special Education and ELs, so it was impossible to tell if achievement was increasing, and the gap closing for these subgroups. There also was Inadequate information on graduation rates and college enrollment to tell if there was a clear record of success.</p> <p>CMS has a strong history of achieving ambitious and significant reforms which indicates that it has the potential to continue achieving significant reforms in the lowest-achieving schools.</p> <p>CMS has several systems (Data Wise Process, EASY IEP, EASY Personalized Education Plan, Indistar) in place that provide educators with important data and information. There is also a Parent Assistant that enables parents to access daily information. The CMS plans to further implement and integrate additional CMS and state data systems and tools over the next several years.</p> <p>Overall, CMS scores at the low end of the high range. The applicant overall has demonstrated a track record of success—but there was inadequate information included to determine the track record for several key subgroups and components.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools makes annual salary information for all school and district employees available via a searchable data base. Detailed budget information is provided in an annual budget book—and a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report is available on the district's website. Overall, this places CMS at the top of the top range.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools adequately describes the state content for implementation. North Carolina has an approved flexibility waiver application which will provide sufficient flexibility and autonomy to CMS to implement personalized learning environments. North Carolina also was awarded a federal Race to the Top grant in 2010-11. Overall, this places CMS at the top of the top range.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	7
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools provides extensive documentation that feedback was solicited from mayors. CMS engaged the community by hold five community forums that drew over 800 participants. Local teacher membership associations were engaged in the conversation about the development of this proposal. Since CMS does not have collective bargaining representation, a vote was held to assess the support of teachers; 71% of teachers supported the proposed plan. This is more than the required 70%--but far from over-whelming support and it will be challenging for the applicant to move forward with some elements to the plan. The variation of support across the schools is a concern, and there may be problems implementing in schools with low levels of support. For example, very few teachers supported the proposed plan at two of the high schools. A strength of the application is that the Applicant recognizes that more engagement and conversations are needed with teachers and their representatives, and it is a sound decision on the part of CMS to continue to listen to the teachers' voice by convening a Teacher Advisory Committee this fall.</p> <p>Little information was provided about how student organizations, civil rights organizations, and early learning programs were engaged.</p> <p>Overall this places CMS at the high end of the middle range, since overall the Applicant has made efforts to engage stakeholders—but some groups had little involvement and there were significant teacher reservations about this proposal.</p>		
(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	3
<p>(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools described the needs analysis that was conducted. It is a strength that student proficiency and growth data were examined. The applicant indicates that three high schools and their feeder schools were selected. The needs assessment data presented for these schools suggests that the needs assessment focused on several high needs subgroups (race/ethnicity; economic disadvantage). However, the overall baseline data for CMS included in this application indicates that Limited English Proficiency students and students with disabilities had some of the lowest proficiency levels and largest gaps. It is unclear why they were not discussed in the needs assessment</p>		

section of the application. Overall this places CMS at the top of the middle range.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	14
<p>(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The plan presented by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools has many strong elements— for example, the digitalized individual learning plan and empowering students by providing them with information about their performance has the potential to accelerate learning.</p> <p>However, insufficient information was provided regarding how the plan will accelerate the learning of two groups (special education, ELs) that have some of the lowest achievement levels. How will this plan assist these subgroups in mastering critical content and develop traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, critical thinking, and problem-solving? It is also unclear whether some students with disabilities will be engaged and empowered in an age-appropriate manner.</p> <p>The Applicant provided insufficient and vague information about how accommodations will be used to enable students with disabilities and ELs to meaningfully access the high-quality content and project-based learning described in this application.</p> <p>The application included a discussion of how teachers may consider the use of self-contained classrooms for students with autism, significant cognitive disabilities, and significant behavioral challenges. Based upon the limited and ambiguous information provided in the application it is unclear whether this complies with IDEA requirements in regards to least restrictive environment (LRE) for students with IEPs. IDEA requires that to the maximum extent possible that students with IEPs be educated in the LRE.</p> <p>Overall, this places CMS at the high end of the mid-range. While the overall plan has many strengths, the plan as failed to sufficiently attend to the needs of students with disabilities and ELs.</p>		
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	17
<p>(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>In general, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools describes a high-quality plan for improving teaching and learning that includes pre- and post-award professional development, pre-launch professional development and a practice round. Some of the professional development will be devoted to information about how to use the system (portals, logging into the system, etc.), and some will be focused on preparing teachers to better use important instructional strategies that have the potential to accelerate growth. Master teachers will provide some of the training—and a coaching will be provided.</p> <p>There are some limitations to the plan. It was unclear if all teachers (including general, special education and EL teachers) would receive training that would enable them to confidently instruct students from high needs subgroups using college and career ready standards. For example, the proposed plan provided an inadequate description of how both general and special education teachers will develop the knowledge and skills needed to successfully accelerate the learning of all students, including students with disabilities.</p> <p>CMS has a solid plan for increasing the number of students receiving instruction from effective and highly effective teachers. Similarly, CMS has a sound plan to “grow” strong school leaders through efforts such as the Leaders for Tomorrow Program and the School Executive Leadership Academy.</p> <p>Overall, this places CMS in the middle of the high range.</p>		

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	12
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools presents a high-quality plan that will support project implementation though there are some limitations in the area of LEA, practices, policies and rules. CMS has made much progress in getting the practices, policies, and rules in place that will facilitate personalized learning. For example, CMS has used a strategic staffing initiative to help ensure that high performing educators are in low performing schools—and that they have the support needed to bring about needed reform. It is appropriate that schools are also developing customized school improvement plans (SIPS) that are expected to be a key document as schools gear up for personalized learning.</p>		

A number of online resources are available to CMS students; some of which allow students to earn credit based on demonstrated mastery; though it is ambiguous whether policies are currently in place which will allow all students to earn credit through demonstrated mastery.

Limited information was provided in the application about how the learning resources will be made full accessible for all students, including students with disabilities and ELs.

Overall, this places CMS at the lower end of the upper range, since overall there are many practices, policies, and rules in place—but more still needs to be done in this area.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)

10

7

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools presented a high-quality plan to support project implementation in regards to LEA and school infrastructure, though it has some limitations. CMS has the infrastructure in place to ensure that all students will have access to technology regardless of income. It is a concern, however, that students from higher socio-economic backgrounds may have access to “better” technology than other students (i.e., the use of the Bring Your Own Technology Approach has the potential to result in technology inequalities).

CMS has web-based tools that students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders can use. CMS is currently phasing in several new systems that will provide greater access. CMS is still in the process of implementing several data systems. It is a concern that the applicant did not provide details about the data systems used for the human resources data and the budget.

It is unclear whether the systems described in the application will allow the export of data in an open data format and if interoperable data systems are being used.

Overall this places CMS at the high end of the mid-range, since the district still has some work to do to get all the needed data systems into place.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	11
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools describes a continuous improvement process; however, specific details about how that will provide timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals, and provide opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements during (and after) the grant were vague.		
Overall, this places CMS at the top of the middle range. While the continuous improvement process has potential, insufficient detail was provided.		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools plans to: convene stakeholder meetings; present project updates at teacher association, parent group, and student group meetings; and provide annual reporting to the larger community. It is unclear what strategies will be used for ongoing communication and engagement for stakeholders who do not participate in meetings. Overall this places CMS at the high end of the middle range.		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:		
The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools application includes charts with the performance measures; however, it inadequately described the rationale for selecting them. Overall, this places CMS in the middle range.		
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	4
(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:		
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools describes an appropriate methodology for evaluating the effectiveness of the Race to the Top-District fund		

investments.. The use of a participatory action research (PAR) framework that recognizes the central role of stakeholders in the research and evaluation process is a strength of this application. The use of PAR is very likely to provide valuable information that can be used to inform decision-making and to improve results. The application would be strengthened if more details about the overall evaluation process were provided. This places CMS at low end of the high range.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments: The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools budget is reasonable for what it proposes to do. Appropriate narratives, that include rationales for investments and priorities, are included for the overall budget and for the project-level budgets. It is possible to distinguish between one-time investments and recurring operational costs. Overall, the Applicant scores at the top of the high end for its budget.		
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	5
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools indicates that it will identify area requiring sustainability—and will sustain beyond the grant period using a combination of district resources, resources from community and business partners, and funding through corporate and private support. Overall, this plan for sustainability scores in the middle of the mid-range due to the sparse details and vagueness.		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	10
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments: The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools recognizes the importance of leveraging resources and expertise, and has identified several partnerships. The partners propose to work together to address the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of students by creating a wraparound support model. The identified partners have the potential to add to what the CMS is proposing to do. Nine appropriate performance measures were identified.. Overall, this places the CMS in the high range. The partnerships described have excellent potential, and there is a plan for sustainability and scale-up.		

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met
Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools addressed how it will build on the core educational assurance areas to create learning environments that are designed to improve learning and teaching. The Applicant met Absolute Priority 1. Each of the core educational assurance areas are addressed at some point in the application. The Applicant articulated a vision which guided the development of a comprehensive and coherent plan. The proposed plan has some limitations as described in this review, but overall it is a high-quality plan.		

Total	210	167
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	12

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools application included an optional budget supplement to expand bandwidth for Bring Your Own Technology (BYOT) implementation for schools beyond the 27 schools participating in Grant activities. The district indicates that this will assist with building an infrastructure that will meet the needs of the LEA, teachers, and students. There is insufficient detail provided about how the activities proposed in this optional budget supplement may or may not be able to scale up without this bandwidth. The proposed budget is appropriate for the described activities. Overall, this places Charlotte-Mecklenburg at lower end of the high range.

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	7
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Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools application included an optional budget supplement for the *Our Insuring Capacity for Common Exam Scoring Project*. This project is designed to ensure that accurate data about student growth and teacher/principal impact is collected. Little information was provided about the proposed project, and the rationale was insufficient. The applicant indicated that it will be used for educators to complete scoring tasks, and will fill a gap until Common Exams can be scored through technology. It is unclear how this proposed project interfaces with the other grant activities proposed in this application. The proposed budget is appropriate for the described activities. Overall, this places Charlotte-Mecklenburg towards the middle of the mid-range.



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0881NC-2 for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA has done an excellent job in carefully describing how it plans to continue its reform efforts, building on existing efforts and focusing on areas where students are still academically behind. This includes efforts to enhance teacher learning so that students will acquire the skills and knowledge they need to make progress. An emphasis is on academic areas where students are still falling short of proficiency. The LEA has articulated how it will use its resources. Its plans are ambitious and comprehensive. This includes strategies for implementing key projects that encompass Pre-K and incorporate a feeder approach that includes 27 schools that feed to and include three high schools.

One of the hallmarks of the LEA's approach is the integration of four key projects that begin with project management to ensure that activities are designed, implemented, monitored, and supported. Schools will be reorganized and personnel will be trained and utilized in different ways (e.g., blended learning, distance learning) to ensure that there is widespread support of teachers and students.

The biggest issues facing the LEA, as in other large urban LEAs, are how to improve and accelerate the learning for disenfranchised students who perform lower than other groups of students. In this LEA, exceptional children, Black, and economically disadvantaged students are behind their peers at each grade level. The programs that the LEA is planning provide sufficient detail to support their ambitious goals.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
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(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The LEA established criteria that it used to identify schools. Schools had to have met the majority of the criteria to qualify for participation: 1) evidence of school leadership and support; 2) low proficiency, low growth, and/or persistent achievement gaps; 3) success at boosting student achievement but still needing support to reduce gaps; 4) evidence of current reform in areas LEAs reform will encompass; 5) high schools with over 60% economically disadvantaged; and 6) facility readiness for space reconfiguration for one of its projects (3). The LEA reviewed its schools against these criteria with a special emphasis on K-12 achievement data to determine if students were being prepared for post secondary success. The LEA based its decisions using these criteria. It would be helpful to see how all of the schools fared using the selection criteria to see how the final schools were identified. Tables 1-2 provide important, albeit limited information.

(b) The list of schools that will be participating has been identified in the application. The list is divided by feeder schools and identifies the specific projects each will be involved in as part of the grant activities. All schools will be involved in one project, four will be involved in two projects, and two will be involved in three projects.

(c) The application includes a table with demographic information that identifies by school the total number of participants, students from low-income families, high-need students, and participating educators. All criteria have been met for participating schools.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)

10

8

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA recognizes that each school is at a different place with regard to reform efforts and its plan includes a scaling up model (strategies) to accommodate where each school is with regard to achieving the goals of the reform efforts. In keeping with its ambitious agenda, the LEA is engaging in various strategies that will help schools phase in activities related to whatever project(s) they will be involved in. The district plans to do this in a variety of ways such as coaching schools, providing partnerships with district staff and community (their blended communities and distance learning are good examples), and importantly through the use of assessment results that will be continually updated for teachers and students. The use of a program evaluator to address project implementation will provide important data about the success of meeting project goals. The district recognizes that formative and summative evaluation is important and intends to conduct ongoing project monitoring and internal reporting on progress toward its performance measures.

The logic model included in the application articulates the strategies it intends to use to achieve its goals. The outputs, initial outcomes, intermediate outcomes, and long-term outcomes appear to be achievable given the activities. Some of the language is vague or ambiguous. Phrases such as "increased opportunities," "increased trust...", "referrals for students and families," and "improved student positive engagement," to name a few are each important but it is not clear how each would be measured so that words like "scaling up" might be more meaningful. When language is ambiguous it is not possible to see how or what precise data would be collected and then used within schools so they could see their own progress toward reaching reform goals.

Overall, the LEA submitted a quality plan that described how the reform effort would be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools, however as noted above, some of the language used was vague or ambiguous made it difficult to see what data would be used and how it would be used.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)

10

6

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(a) There appears to be a mismatch between what appears in the logic model that will be assessed over time and what appears in the Performance Measures chart in the application. While some areas are similar, e.g., absence information and reading and math information, it is presumed based on the logic model that summative assessment information will be gathered in several other areas that contribute to the overall reform effort. The individual projects echo these areas so it is assumed that baseline data and goals have been established in each area and the information is missing. These areas contribute to potential attainment of project goals that are a part of the overall LEA vision. Nevertheless, the projected growth as identified in the chart is reasonable and information in the application demonstrates that project activities are geared to improving areas within the chart.

(b) The vision set forth by the LEA has the potential for decreasing achievement gaps as noted in the notice. The information in the chart illustrating the projected changes is consistent with the activities described in the application.

(c) There is narrative about the potential for an increase in graduation rates, a statement that the cohort graduation rate for 4-year and 5-year will be reported by sub-group, and the logic model includes an increase in graduation rate as a long-term outcome, however, data on graduation rates by sub-group and goals for change are missing.

(d) Although the vision/reform effort leans toward increasing college enrollment by virtue of its project activities that are targeted to improve students' skills and knowledge and the logic model includes this as a long-term outcome there is no information about college enrollment with baseline information and goals.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	9
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(a) It appears from the narrative provided that there have been modest, but positive changes in proficiency levels in the 2010-2011 and 2011-12 school years, however, the notice asked for data <i>in the past four years</i> and these data are missing. In addition, the only information that is provided is content/subject-based, e.g., math achievement, HS English I proficiency, and does not include high school graduation rates and college enrollment rates.</p> <p>(b) The LEA has been engaged in school and district reforms and is proposing ambitious reforms targeted to its students lowest achieving/low-performing schools. Importantly, there is also a focus on teachers and the community. The reform vision recognizes the importance of all of the variables that contribute to improvement in student outcomes. Its focused projects, including data systems (e.g., Data Wise, EASY IEP, CMS Parent Assistant) that will allow continual review of student progress, target specific improvements.</p> <p>(c) As briefly noted in (b) above, the LEA is to be commended for its work on designing and implementing a variety of data system that can be used by students, school staff, and parents to continually monitor how students are performing. The data systems appear to be user friendly and will allow the education process to be fully transparent. They will be if the data systems do not operate in isolation. What is not clear in the application is how students, school staff, and parents will be trained and supported to use the systems in concert with one another.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>The application states that the district's annual budget book details the allotments per school for school-based instructional and support positions and annual salary information for each school and district employee via a searchable database for:</p> <p>(a) All school -level instructional and support staff,</p> <p>(b) Instructional staff,</p> <p>(c) Teachers.</p> <p>(d) The annual budget book details allotments and corresponding formulas per school level for non-personnel expenditures.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>NC won a RTT grant and much of what the LEA is doing is to further the grant goals and tailor its goals to the specific needs of the LEA. To illustrate, the state adopted Common Core Standards and launched an agenda to support students, teachers, and principals in each of the areas. The LEAs goals and activities support alignment of the state goals. To this end, the LEA has designed four pillars that align with the federal American Recovery Act (ARRA). The pillars address teachers and principals, quality standards and assessments, turning around the lowest achieving schools, and data systems to improve instruction. Although the work of the LEA and the State is connected, the LEA appears to have autonomy and flexibility within each of the pillars to tailor its activities to meet the needs of its schools and communities. The advantage that the LEA has with regard to autonomy is that the State through its RTT grant set the tone for educational reform and the LEA has used the flexibility it has (e.g., in staffing structures, allocation and use of time, building teams of effective educators to be used in a variety of contexts such as in distance education, use of digital tools, and specialized learning options) to develop its own goals (that are aligned with the State) and pursue an agenda that fits with the context of the district.</p>		
(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	6
<p>(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(a) The LEA began its engagement process with stakeholders months before the release of the grant's guidelines by conducting community forums including students, families, teachers, principals, community partners, agencies and philanthropic organizations to address educational issues facing the LEA. Advisory committees were also put in place to engage in dialogue with groups and solicit feedback about issues and the design of the reform effort. Interviews were conducted with students, teachers, and higher education partners. Local teacher membership</p>		

association that represented the interests and needs of teachers were also engaged in conversation. The LEA plans to continue the conversation with teacher advisory groups for input on the performance measures and the best methods for professional development.

(ii) NC prohibits collective bargaining. To assess the support of its teachers, principals shared the proposed plan with staff and teachers and according to the narrative, 71% of teachers supported the plan. HOWEVER, the distribution of acceptance was not the same across all schools with two of the high schools (East Meek and HS Harding University HS) and one of the elementary schools (Walter Byers) having a significantly low level of teacher buy-in. This could affect implementation of project activities and negatively affect expected student outcomes.

(b) Letters of support were obtained from community stakeholders including county government, Mecklenburg Citizens for Public Education, and United Way of Central Carolinas. Letters from parents, parent organizations, student organizations, the business community, civil rights organizations, advocacy groups, and institutions of higher learning either were not solicited, or if they were, letters were not included or mentioned in the narrative.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)

5

3

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA has submitted a high quality plan that includes personalized learning environments and provides information about the logic behind the reform initiative. Information was gathered to identify needs and gaps (however, see below where information is missing that would have strengthened the rationale for what is included in the plan). The district first conducted a comprehensive review of the initiatives it has been engaged in that impact teaching and learning from both a teacher and a student perspective to identify specific needs and gaps. These were reviewed vis-a-vis what would be involved in scaling up from the current initiatives to address identified gaps, how much flexibility would be needed within schools to achieve the goals, and what would be needed to sustain the work over time. The reviews included research that had been conducted to address meeting the goals.

From the careful review and analyses conducted, the areas of math and reading emerged as the areas where the greatest gaps were present, specifically the gaps among sub-groups. Using the information from reviews and the data gathered, the district concluded that closing these particular gaps would be essential to prepare students for higher education and the 21st century workforce. The data confirmed the importance of building blocks based on student mastery of the Common Core and Essential standards. For this to occur the LEA determined that a year's growth each year would not be sufficient; instead, 1.5 years of growth per academic year was needed to begin to close the gaps among sub-groups and enable these students to be fully prepared for college and careers. Data used to establish gaps were graduation rates and student achievement data.

What is not completely clear from the application:

1. Data that extends back to four years that would document the specific needs of sub-groups over time.
2. Disaggregation of student achievement data on which goals, activities, timelines, and responsible parties would be engaged in helping students' achieve mastery. Disaggregated data permit a more detailed analysis of the specific skills and knowledge that are needed to help students meet the 1.5 years of growth for each academic year.

Overall, the district submitted a quality plan. That is, the plan addresses key areas identified in the notice. However, there is information that is missing or is not clear that would enhance the quality of the plan.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	16

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Learning

(a)

(i) The digitalized learning plans the LEA has developed will be used to provide current and continual information to students. Each student has a customized learning plan that will follow the student through his or her "learning journey," specifically what the student is learning while in K-12 and how learning will prepare the student to reach post-secondary goals. Students (and parents) will be able to access this at any time.

A survey will be administered to capture each student's learning style and personal interests. Using this information, material for each student will be customized and will include high quality content, project based learning activities, and frequent assessments. These data will [presumably] provide educators with information about students' progress so that the goal of 1.5 years of growth can be achieved (noted in section B(5)).

(ii) The Common Core Standards are linked to college preparation and the workforce. Although none of the Projects that are key to the LEA reform effort specifically emphasize college or workforce preparation, the link to the Common Core Standards and the fact that they are integral part of the individualized learning plans are evidence that the LEA is structuring its learning activities to achieve these goals. The data to be gathered as part of this system will measure progress toward the attainment of the common core goals and standards.

(iii) The Project-based approach to learning will be a key component of the LEA's commitment toward "deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest." Projects will be rigorous, meaningful, and will require critical thinking, problem solving, communication, and collaboration. The application provides a detailed illustration of its model of learning *Understanding by Design*. The deep learning experiences take place through multi-day tasks. The Projects are tied to the Common core Goals and Standards and are in the digitalized learning plans for students (and parents).

(iv) Projects offer an explicit opportunity for students to learn about diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that can deepen their individual learning but there is no evidence that the projects will be designed, at least in part, to give students access to different communities, backgrounds, lifestyles, and locations. Nevertheless, the LEA does plan to give students access to a world outside their own through technology using webinars, video conferencing, virtual field trips, and personal communication using Skype, Go to Meeting, and Edmodo.

(v) As noted in (i) above, the digitalized learning plan for each student is linked to the Common Core goals and Standards. The project-oriented learning teaches critical thinking skills, problem solving, communication skills and engages students in creativity. The project orientation to learning also emphasizes teamwork. A key component of the LEA reform initiative is to utilize teachers as coaches or facilitators of learning which places more responsibility on the shoulders of students as they take control of their learning. Teachers will reinforce this in the daily activities students engage in to meet their learning goals. One instructional period will be set aside every two weeks for students to meet with an advisor to review his/her progress about his/her learning goals.

(b)

(i) Evidence for this has been described earlier. The LEA is designing a digital personalized learning scope and sequence for each student that will enable each student to monitor and achieve his or her learning goals and ensure that he or she can graduate on time and be college- and career-ready. An important feature is that parents have access to the learning plan and can monitor with their children how they are doing. Because the skills and knowledge are linked to the common core goals and standards they are not bound by grades, but rather by skills and knowledge. Each plan is updated daily.

What is not clear is if the information in the personalized plans has been cross-walked with the year-to-year achievement tests so that students and parents can see the fit between what students are learning and an expected outcome on the year-to-year assessments. It is not clear if the assessments that are part of the learning plans are to be cross-walked with the year-to-year assessments. Parents and students need to feel confident that the learning plan is congruent with what students will be tested on at the end of each year, especially if the 1.5 yearly gain is reasonable to expect. Markers to indicate progress toward achieving the 1.5 yearly growth would be desirable.

(ii) The LEA reform effort includes a variety of high quality instructional approaches and environments. It does this through innovative curriculum (e.g., project based learning), teaching strategies (e.g., distance learning, blended communities, open space classrooms), and designing different pathways for learning that include virtual learning, attending accelerated courses offered elsewhere, e-Learning academies. The emphasis is not only on involving students in content rich activities, but also involving them in learning the softer skills of collaboration, communication, creativity, and collaboration.

(iii) As noted elsewhere, there is evidence that all learning in the LEA reform effort is aligned with the Common Core Goals and Standards, which translates into the design of learning activities that will meet the goals and standards. Examples of a few lessons that include specific skills and knowledge and that teach critical thinking skills, as well as provide opportunities to solve a range of problems individually and in learning groups illustrate what will be included for each student. An important feature of what will be available to students is that students and parents will have access to most of this via technology. The digital content will be presented through a variety of providers.

(iv) (A and B) The digitalized learning plan will be updated daily so both students and parents will have current and continual access to what is expected and what has been achieved. This will include assessment data so that students and their parents will be able to monitor students' progress in attaining skills and knowledge toward mastery of college and career-ready standards, as well as graduation requirements**. Daily, bi-monthly and end-of-marking-period assessment data will be available through the digital learning plan. **This is presumed based on the alignment with Common Core Standards, but was not explicitly mentioned in the application in this section.

(v) The LEA has developed strategies to accommodate high-need students: 1) Students with Disabilities: Individual Education Plans (IEP) teams will develop service delivery options based on individual student needs. These may range from individualized instruction to group instruction in different settings, depending on the specific needs of each student. 2) Limited English Proficient Students: The English as a

Second Language (ESL) program is designed to help students become English proficient so they can be fully mainstreamed and achieve at high levels in content areas. Class scheduling is determined by students' English language proficiency. 3) Students At Risk of Academic Failure: These students have Personalized Education Plans that identify the areas of highest need and the interventions that are needed. Teachers regularly review and add to the body of information contained in the Personalized Education Plan (PEP). Information such as credit recovery options, credits attained, and credits still needed are constantly reviewed and updated. The logic model identifies in Project 4 activities to ensure that students will not drop out of school.

(c) The LEA plans a student orientation during the first 2 weeks of each school year. As schools develop their individualized designs to meet the needs of their students the LEA plans to identify training and support for school personnel, school partners, and volunteers, and importantly, the students it serves. Although the training is not explicitly stated, the logic model -- under inputs and activities--as well as under expected outputs, indicates that school design teams will be organized and implemented to pursue the projects. Students will be introduced to and taught how to use their digital learning plans in order to track their own learning and how to monitor their progress. School personnel will be available to assist them.

In sum, the LEA has presented a high quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment that will provide all students with the support needed to graduate college ready. The plan developed by the LEA includes an approach to learning that engages and empowers all learners, in particularly high-need students, in an age appropriate manner. What is not clear is if the information in the personalized plans has been cross-walked with the year-to-year achievement tests so that students and parents can see the fit between what students are learning and an expected outcome on the year-to-year assessments. It is not clear if the assessments that are part of the learning plans are to be cross-walked with the year-to-year assessments. This omission of information resulted in a reduction in the overall points awarded for this section.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	14
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(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(a) As noted in an earlier section discussion, not all of the teachers in the LEA appear to support the initiative. In particular there is a low level of support at two of the three high schools and it is not clear how the LEA plans to ensure that all participants will be engaged in the training/professional development (PD) given that in a majority of the teachers in these schools do not appear to support the initiative. This could affect the expected outcomes for the initiative.

(i) The LEA's personalized learning model includes professional development (PD)/training that will encompass all facets of each project. Instructional leaders will assume the role of coach, collaborator, and consultant in an environment that facilitates and supports learning about new methods for teaching and learning. This includes training in how to use the technology that will afford daily information to teachers, students, and parents. The LEA recognizes that strategic and ongoing PD are key to this and they plan to begin their PD prior to a RTTD award and continue with the specialized PD throughout the duration of the grant. The logic model includes PD. It is school as well as district based to accommodate the different models that reach across schools. One of the hallmarks is a common planning period that will be used daily to collectively review data, discuss progress of students, and coordinate activities.

(ii) The training/PD provided by the LEA includes, depending on the project and its specific activities, how adaptation of content and instruction to meet the needs of students will occur (the charts in the Appendices 8 and 9 illustrates this). An earlier discussion identified how curriculum and instruction for high need students will be adapted.

Additional information that provided examples of how curriculum and instruction within projects would be adapted would strengthen the application. However, it is noted that the individualized learning plans do include information that illustrates attention to students needs.

(iii) The area of frequent assessment has been woven throughout the application. Daily, formative assessments will be conducted as well as testing for mastery of material covered (summative assessment). All assessments align to the Common Core State and NC Essential Standards. Information is available digitally to students, teachers, and parents. Information will allow each user of the technology to see students' progress in mastering new skills and knowledge. What is less certain is whether information about the 1.5 years of growth is noted so that students, teachers, and parents can see students will be able to make the LEAs targeted overall growth for students in each content area. This is a key feature of the initiative and information is lacking about how the activities within the projects will accelerate learning to advance students 1.5 years for every year of schooling.

(iv) The LEA has a teacher evaluation plan however an illustration of the teacher evaluation system was not provided. The LEA states that the plan includes teacher observation, student perception surveys, student formative and summative data, and professional learning community engagement but it is not clear how teachers are evaluated using this information, specifically to determine teacher effectiveness, and how teachers would be provided support in areas where they have not met specific targets. The application states that principals will use these multiple measures but it is not clear how as an illustration of the plan was not included.

There was no information on a principal evaluation system.

(b)

(i) The LEA intends to partner with sources that can develop tools to provide information for educators to identify optimal learning approaches to respond to individual student needs. The digitalized learning plan contains data and will incorporate non-academic data pertaining to social, emotional, and cognitive needs. The LEA is working with implementation partners in these areas. The chart in the application illustrates the kind of data that will be incorporated. It will be available at the student level. The goal is to customize learning experiences for each student that relies on both academic and non-academic data.

(ii) The LEA will strategically select implementation partners that will provide a repository of high-quality skill-based lessons. The digitalized personalized learning model will include these features and they will be aligned to the Common Core Standards. The lessons/activities will be embedded with content rich materials. The LEA recognizes the importance of teacher autonomy so the lessons/activities may be adapted to cover what is being taught daily and weekly and, importantly, will be tailored to meet the needs of individual students.

(iii) As noted in (C) (2) (b) (ii) above, the key technology tool to be designed and used by the LEA is its personalized learning plan that matches everything to each student's needs (e.g., each student's attributes will be matched with daily lessons and a feedback loop that includes assessment data). The tool can be used, as noted earlier to guide and inform teachers in their preparation and design of learning activities for students. The digital learning tool will use actionable and non-actionable data to produce a continuous cycle of improvement. The example provided of Teach to One illustrates the information that will be available to teachers.

(c) Given the emphasis on all educators an issue is that a small number of high school teachers in two of the high schools have indicated they will support the LEA initiative. This calls into question whether school-wide successful implementation of the implementation of the LEA initiative would be possible.

(i) As noted earlier in (a) (iv) the LEA has a teacher evaluation system that includes important information but without an illustration of exactly how data are used and when data are used for specific purposes (as a rubric might explain) it is not possible to see how teacher effectiveness would be evaluated, specifically how information would be used to improve not only teacher effectiveness, but also school effectiveness. The components of the system have been identified, however, how the information would be used is not clear.

(ii) As noted earlier in section (a) the LEA has identified and described training it will provide to all educators, as well as practices that will be designed to improve school progress toward the goals of increasing student performance and closing the achievement gap. Extensive training will be provided on the Common Core Essential Standards and a variety of personnel will provide the training and PD and will be available as coaches to facilitate learning and offer support. This includes specialized support for high-need students in the district.

What is not clear is how the system will monitor the 1.5 annual growth that it is targeting and how feedback about this type of growth will be shared with parents, teachers, and students, and what will be in place to retread when necessary if targeted yearly goals are not being met. Formative data should provide this but it is not clear if the formative data will be linked to the target of 1.5 years of growth per school year for each student.

(d)

The key to identifying highly effective teachers and utilizing their skills and knowledge in the classroom and to facilitate and support for students in hard to staff schools, subjects, and specialty areas rests on a teacher evaluation system that incorporates key information about teachers. It also rests on providing ongoing training and PD to teachers. As noted in other section discussion, it is not clear how highly effective teachers will actually be identified--the specific data and how it will be used--the algorithm--to make this determination. The LEA will provide a lot of varied supports needed to scale up teachers' skills and knowledge so that teachers in all classrooms are able to provide high quality curriculum and instruction. It also has plans of how it will attract and retain high-potential educators to the 27 schools in the reform effort. Teachers will receive different types of training to build their skills and knowledge.

As noted in earlier discussions, it is not clear how the LEA is intending to evaluate its principals--the information that would be used and the algorithm--to establish who is highly effective. The LEA does plan to build strong leaders through opportunities it will make available to principals such as the Leaders for Tomorrow Program and the School Executive Leadership Academy. The LEA also has a partnership with the Wallace Foundation to build high effective principals.

In summary, a high quality plan has many features and there are shortcomings in what has been presented in the application. The plan is a quality plan and would be high quality if the issues raised in this section had been addressed. Both the very positive aspects of the plan are described in this section as well as what is missing.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
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(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	15
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(D) (1)</p> <p>Overall, the information in this section provides strong evidence of a high quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every student, educators, and level of the educational system with the support and resources needed, and when and where they are needed. The information below provides evidence of this.</p> <p>(a) The LEA will have a governance and support structure that will oversee all projects and their respective activities. This includes a Project Director, administrative assistant, and a Project Evaluator. District support will be provided through a three-tier system that includes zone offices at the first tier (these teams provide support for all areas of school functioning and include the district superintendent and staff for each of the six zones [an organizational chart illustrates coordination across the zones]. The second tier includes an interdepartmental network of central teams, which represent two divisions. The third tier consists of the school-based teams. All members of each of the teams across the three tiers will be full time employees who are dedicated to the work.</p> <p>(b) The reform's design represents a structure that is aligned to the Common Core Standards and yet is flexible to allow for school level differences. School leadership teams are given flexibility to create a culture that is unique to the needs of the school and its community. Staffing needs may be different across schools and this will be addressed in the individual school improvement plans (SIPs) where data from needs assessments will be used to identify strategies that will be needed to meet students' needs, as well as what is needed to provide adequate staffing. There is mention that the SIPs are a key component of principal evaluation, however, it is not clear how they would be used to determine principal effectiveness.</p> <p>(c) Students have many different venues where they can master their skills and knowledge. There are online classes, credit recovery programs, honors programs, learning centers, an academy for acceleration, and flexibility in schedules to accommodate the different needs of students. Mastery will be demonstrated by the accomplishment of goals in specific areas and not on the amount of time a student may use in each area.</p> <p>(d) In concert with (c) above, students not only have different venues in which to demonstrate mastery of skills and knowledge but they also have multiple times in multiple ways to demonstrate their mastery. Online formative and summative assessments, student work samples, and in-class testing can be used by students. These can occur whenever a student wishes. As soon as a student demonstrates mastery, the student can move on to the next level of learning.</p> <p>(e) The digital individual learning plans are custom designed to meet the needs of all students in the district. The learning resources and practices to meet the needs can be tailored for the full range of students in the LEA from the gifted (e.g., Horizons program) to special needs students (e.g., Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model for English language learners). Other interventions include Academic Orientation for Students with Interrupted Formal Education and Personalized Education Plans (PEPs) for students at risk of academic failure. Each student's specific needs will be identified and appropriate, flexible resources, will be used to support the student.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>(D) (2)</p> <p>The applicant describes a near high quality plan to support project implementation through an infrastructure that will provide every student, educator, and level of the education system with the support and resources they need, as well as when and where they are needed. There were no specific policies discussed in this section, however, in other parts of the application, policies that support eh reform initiative were cited. There were many positive activities identified in this section as evidenced below, and there were a few shortcomings that resulted in points deducted. They, too, are mentioned below. Despite a few observed weaknesses, this section communicated an infrastructure that is capable of providing what will be needed to move the reform agenda along to reach its goals.</p> <p>(a) The LEA has reorganized its central office to ensure that all personnel, parents, and students will have access to all written and digital resources. Over 75% of the schools (N= 21) will be equipped with wireless access in Fall 2012. Funds are still needed to ensure that all 27 schools have this access. There are various programs such as the 1:1 laptop initiative and the Shape the Future that will help digitally excluded families gain access to schools in grades 6-12.</p> <p>It is not clear how families without digital access will be able to monitor their students' progress in their individual plans. It is also not clear if the LEA intends to provide the individual plans for each student in the languages of the parents so parents will have easy access to the information in the system.</p>		

- (b) The LEA is providing different training opportunities to ensure that students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders have appropriate levels of support. The LEA uses several web-based tools for information dissemination and content creation. The district maintains an online, internal database of training resources. iTunesU is available to students on both Android and Apple platforms. Families have access to Parent University where they can participate in workshops (offered in both Spanish and English) and are offered in different locations for easy access by parents. Parent Assistant helps parents track their children's progress in school from any computer.
- (c) The LEA provides a variety of mechanisms for individuals inside the LEA to export information such as blogs, Goggle e-mail (which will be expanded to include parents), and digital lockers (where information can be stored).
- (d) The LEA uses a component of the NCEdCloud called the Instructional Improvement System (IIS), which is a digital tool, to provide educators with actionable data to systematically manage student improvement "as it occurs". Data include formative assessments, benchmark assessments, summative assessments, and student work. The IIS will include links to training modules on leadership and content knowledge that will facilitate reflective practice. There was no mention of the system incorporating budget data or human resources data.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	11
(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>(E) (1)</p> <p>The LEA states that it will ensure a continuous cycle of assessing success and challenges with meetings it goals while incorporating input from key stakeholders beginning prior to year 1 of the grant (work it has already been involved in as a precursor to the grant). The logic model identifies the overall scope of what the LEA intends to so. Throughout the application the LEA has described how it will gather and use information it will regularly collect, and with whom the information will be shared. The district will invest its award in its human resources and in technology to be used to monitor and support student improvement. Information will shared regular with all stakeholders. The LEA will utilize a Program Evaluator whose job is 100% dedicated to overseeing the gathering and dissemination of formative and summative data on a year-to-year basis. This includes working with the Finance Team to conduct a cost-benefit analysis of materials and resources. The Project will oversee the management of the grant, which includes monitoring student improvement and for making sure that any gaps are remedied in a timely manner. Information will be shared using the LEAs technology.</p> <p>In summary, the combination of the logic model and the information in this section provide concrete information about the intention of the District but the description lacks specific information about the District's strategies--fleshing out how the district intends to monitor, measure, and publicly share information. Points were deducted for this reason.</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5
(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>(E) (2)</p> <p>The LEA has demonstrated a high quality approach to continuously improve its plan. It will do this by using several different strategies to ensure effective, ongoing communication with internal and external stakeholders. These include: 1) regular meetings of stakeholder groups [regularly in year 1 and quarterly in year 2], 2) project updates at regularly scheduled meetings with local teacher associations, parent groups, student groups, district leadership, and school staff, 3) annual reports to the Board of Education, and 4) annual reporting to the larger community.</p> <p>The LEA did not state whether it will share information using its technology systems or whether all of the communication will be meeting- and paper [report] based.</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	5
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:		
<p>(E) 3</p>		

The information contained in the charts provided in the application demonstrate that the data to be collected is consistent with the goals of the overall reform effort. The applicant has selected ambitious, yet achievable measures overall and for each sub-group, with annual targets for each year of the grant, as well as post grant targets in each area. It uses census sub-groups for reporting information. The rationale for its selection of the measures was included in descriptions in the application. Information about each measure, specifically how it will provide rigorous, timely, and formative leading information tailored to its proposed plan is included and is tied to its theory of action. How the LEA will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient is note progress in an area is also explained. A lot of the information for this section is woven throughout the application in various descriptions of activities. The applicant has identified 10 performance measures.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)

5

3

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(E) (4)

The LEA's evaluation plan includes a review of its finances, pedagogy, training, and human capital. The LEA will evaluate the effectiveness of its grant activities by measuring student performance at regular intervals (the data to be collected has been discussed throughout the application and cited elsewhere). Teacher performance will be evaluated at regular intervals using data in its teacher evaluation plan. As needed, other data will be gathered if gaps are identified where information is crucial for making decisions (e.g., where refinement may be needed in project implementation). Evaluation planning will employ a comprehensive participatory action research (PAR) methodology. PAR is a good choice because it emphasizes the central role of stakeholders in the research process. It is commonly used in action research studies. It is appropriate to use given the participatory action framework the district will use. The Program Evaluator to be hired for the reform effort will gather data on professional development and training, use of technology, and the delivery of services. Changes in school schedules will also be evaluated to determine if the changes resulted in academic improvements for students.

The timeline for the three targeted areas -- decrease in unexcused absences, improvement in math, improvement in reading -- by sub-group are ambitious yet achievable.

Missing: a template/chart that identifies the goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties.

Overall: Despite some information that is missing, the LEA's plans to evaluate the RTTD funded activities to identify progress toward reaching its goals and its overall success is sound. The LEA has in place (or planned) a clear and high quality approach to continuously improve its plan. The missing information resulted in a reduction in points. The information would have provided important information about objectives, activities to reach them, when they would occur, and who was responsible within the LEA.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10
(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:		
(F) (1)		
The applicant's budget includes both narrative and tables and includes the following with sufficient information to give confidence that what is being allocated is consistent with what is planned and needed to meet the goals of the project:		
a) All funds are identified that will support the project.		
b) The appropriation of funds is reasonable and sufficient to support development and implementation of what is proposed.		
c) A thoughtful rationale is provided for the investments the LEA will make to meet its goals.		
(i) The tables for each project are broken down by personnel and cost assumption and within cost assumption it is broken down by each year of the grant.		
(ii) The information described in (i) above is broken down by expenses for each year and it is apparent what are one time investments and what are longer term investments to sustain the grant.		

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	7
(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:		
(F) (2)		
<p>The applicant has a near high quality plan for its project activities (there are some missing areas identified in previous sections) and is committed to the work during the grant period. The application states its interest in continuing activities beyond the grant period. Plans include leveraging public-private partnerships and district resources to continue the grant activities. Throughout the application the LEA has described how it will develop and maintain project activities. However, it is much less clear exactly how the LEA will sustain the efforts underway when the grant period ends. It states it will leverage a combination of district resources, resources from the community and business partnerships, and funding through corporate and private support. How it plans to do this is not entirely clear. There is no budget information beyond the four-year period of the grant.</p>		

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	10
Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:		
<p>(1) The proposed work by the LEA builds on multi-agency partnerships involving an Academy, service providing agencies, and university researchers all working collaboratively to implement the wraparound model of care for youth in high poverty urban schools. Networks were established to develop strategies and outcomes for each area. A strong civic infrastructure supports the work. The partnership has strong support from the county, schools, Board, superintendent, zone superintendent, principals of the schools involved, a child advocacy organization, and other stakeholders.</p> <p>(2) The LEA has identified 7 population-level desired outcomes that align with the LEAs proposal. They are reasonable and are aligned with and support the applicant's broader RTTD proposal.</p> <p>(3)</p> <p>(a) The core academic, attendance, and disciplinary indicators are tracked by participating schools and the district. Teachers will provide Teacher Report Forms for children and youth enrolled in the initiative at least twice a year. Parents/caregivers will agree to participate in the evaluation.</p> <p>(b) Students with the highest needs will be targeted (eligible students are selected based on meeting any of the following 4 criteria: academics, attendance, unexcused absences, residential or educational instability, or behavior. These data will be used to target resources in order to improve the results for each participating students.</p> <p>(c) Various indicators of academic functioning will be available for all students in the targeted schools so it will be possible to determine if the intervention has benefits for non-intervention or non-eligible students. Although this is not a scaling up model it will provide important information about potential implementation in other schools. The LEA did not state an explicit scaling up model.</p> <p>(d) The strategy for improving initiative results over time is that the partnership will use data-based feedback to guide training, coaching, and resource allocation. Evaluation partners at UNC Charlotte have developed measures to assess implementation of child and family teams. Feedback will provide indicators of strength, areas that need attention, and will be used to target strategies for increasing fidelity of implementation.</p> <p>(4) A basic tenet of the LEA's wraparound model of care planning and service/support is that the partnership will integrate education with other services. In implementation a crucial component will be ensuring consistency of plan elements across the action steps for school personnel and for providers or family members so everyone is working toward common goals. The partnership will integrate education and other services and is likely to succeed.</p> <p>(5)</p> <p>(a) The LEA will hire 8 Lead Care Coordinators to manage and coordinate the partners' efforts to implement the wraparound model through the Harding High Feeder Schools. As part of their role the will work with coordinating care agencies involved in this work. This includes conducting a Strengths, Needs, and Cultural Discovery assessment. They will also have access t the Student and Family Profile Forms that include demographic as well as needs assessment data and information about services that are being provided.</p>		

(b) With grant funding, the partnership will be able to fund a large-scale assessment of the strengths and needs of the feeder schools. Evaluators will also gather data on the school's organizational climate. Schoolwide measures will be examined to better understand changes in students to help improve student outcomes. Lead Care Coordinators will be responsible for identifying and managing an inventory of community-based resources. Information will be updated regularly. The partnership will be successful given the careful attention given to detail.

(c) A Student Support Team will complete an initial screening of students needs for the student and the family. Each Lead Agency then is expected to provide family case management services to 25 students. If the SST determines that a child has greater needs than can be met by the school or referrals to external agencies, the student and family are referred to the school's System of Care (SOC) team. The SOC team reviews everything and then identifies appropriate lead Care Coordinating Agency to coordinate wraparound care, based on the child's needs and the family's needs and resources. Everything is monitored by a Community Planning team.

(d) Within the wraparound model, care is family driven and youth guided. This means that student and families are full partners in the planning process. The belief is that when parents and students work together, the more likely students will be able to achieve long-term academic success. Data sharing among partnering agencies also then avoids overlap and creates a structure of support so that students and families will not fall through the cracks. Finally, evaluation data collected from families will be used to facilitate ongoing discussions of family needs and will enable the family to receive the support it needs.

(e) Assessment of practices and processes of the Child and Family Teams is the hallmark of the system. There will be routine assessment of the fidelity of implementation using a set of measures developed by James Cook called Participant Rating Forms (PRF) which will assess such factors as Cohesion and Team Functioning. There is also a standardized observation form that will be used.

(6) The LEA has identified population-level desired results and annual performance measures for each targeted student group for each year. The performance measures for each population-level desired result is appropriate for the targeted student group.

Overall: the applicant has provided comprehensive information that pertains to each section.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The LEA has addressed throughout the application how it will create learning environments to meet all of the targeted students in the 27 schools in the initiative it has planned. All of the learning activities have been aligned with the Common Core Essential Standards. The individual learning system, a hallmark of the reform initiative includes the learning activities, as well as assessment information, and information that will permit teachers, students, and parents to monitor and keep track of students' progress toward meeting academic goals, particularly those that will ensure that students are being prepared for college or career, and importantly that students will be able to meet graduation requirements. Closing the achievement gap among sub-groups is a goal that will be achievable with the activities that are being design and the close monitoring of students by all stakeholders. Services for the highest need students will be coordinated through partnerships with a variety of community-based organizations.

Learning activities have been developed to deepen students' understanding. Project-based activities are one of the key methods for engaging students and expanding their understanding beyond the classroom door.

Training and professional development will be available to participating teachers on an ongoing basis. Parents will also have access to training for the technology they will be able to use to keep track of their students' progress.

Total	210	171
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	15

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

Optional budget Supplement 1 is to expand the Bandwidth Expansion for BYOT Implementation, which assists with building a technology infrastructure that serves the needs for gathering, analyzing and utilizing data to inform instruction. The budget for the first optional budget is \$2 million.

The money will be spread across the four years of the grant period and will go primarily toward personnel costs to implement the project.

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	15
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Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

Optional budget supplement 2 is for the Insuring Capacity for Common Exam Scoring Project, which will assure that the LEA has accurate data about student growth and teacher/principal impact. This need is so educators can complete scoring tasks until the Common Exams can be scored using technology. The budget for the second optional budget is just under \$2 million.

The money will go primarily toward personnel costs and is appropriate.



Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0881NC-3 for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) have set forth a comprehensive, coherent, and convincing reform vision that builds on past work of the district such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • four proven approaches of highly effective teachers • piloting new ways of middle school math instruction through teacher teaming, reconfigured learning spaces, and use of adaptive digital tools • expanding a successful wraparound community school model <p>CMS outlines an ambitious and detailed plan over seven years to carry out the vision across 27 schools to positively impact student learning and increase equity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifying a management initiative to oversee all work • clearly describes 4 approaches schools can utilize in their design framework built on past successes • the four schools selected for the middle school math have demonstrated the ability to improve math proficiency, close achievement gaps, and personalize student learning • expanding an already successful comprehensive model at Reid Park of personalization of early childhood education, family involvement, human and social services, and health and mental services <p>Based on the detailed, coherent, and achievable vision supported by evidence I have scored this criterion in the high range.</p>		
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>CMS has provided a clear description of the process used to select schools to participate</p>		

- 6 criterion for selection focused on school and teacher leadership, low growth across student groups, past successes in closing achievement gaps but need support, participating in current reform, more than 60% economically disadvantaged, and faculty readiness for reconfiguration
- chart of reading and math proficiency for grades 3 through 8 while showing a slight increase for all students, there are achievement gaps across subgroups such as gender with largest discrepancies across subgroups in reading
- chart for Level III Algebra I and English I illustrates a similar pattern of gaps across subgroups as well as a decline for all subgroups in Algebra I proficiency while the proficiency for white students remained relatively the same and high for both Algebra I and English I
- a list of schools that will participate in proposal activities clearly identifies the projects in which each school will participate
- a chart provides in detail the total number of participating students, the number of low income families, high need students and number of participating educators

The evidence is comprehensive and convincing.

With the evidence provided in the charts and text for the criteria, I score this section in the high range.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)

10

8

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

CMS has described a detailed plan for implementing the reform proposal using a phase-in approach over seven years.

The goal of personalizing student learning through supporting schools is presented in a logic model outlining assumptions/rationale for each of the 4 projects presented in the vision statement, inputs, activities, outputs, initial outcomes, intermediate outcomes, and long-term outcomes.

In some cases the measures suggested are based on quantitative data (increase in number of students progressing to the next level, increase in post-secondary enrollments) while other measures are qualitative (increased trust, more collaborative environment).

The plan is high quality but It is not clear how some the outcomes will be measured or how instruments will be developed to accomplish the measure.

This section was scored high medium.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)

10

7

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

North Carolina has an approved waiver from NCLB requirements for 2012-2013 as specified in ESEA.

The LEA-wide goals for student outcomes for CMS will be based on Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs). Each year the number of AMOs met and the percentage of AMOs met will be reported. This replaces the Adequate Yearly Progress designation for each school

The AMO targets were set to reduce the number of non-proficient students by one-half within six years. Targets were based on 2010-11 data and identified each federally reported subgroup for reading and mathematics.

The criteria for an Honor School of Excellence per the ABCs of Public Education, a school will need to meet all of its AMO targets. Meeting expected growth and a composite of 90 percent or higher will be required for the Honor School of Excellence designation.

The cohort graduation rates will be reported by subgroups.

The goals for CMS are described in Section B. As described the vision of CMS will likely support improved student learning and increased equity across diverse student groups.

Score for this section medium.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	12
<p>(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>CMS has demonstrated an impressive record of success in improving student learning and closing achievement gaps over the last four years. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> for 2011-12 overall proficiency in reading and math for grades 3-8 increased 3.8 percentage points and 3.9 percentage points respectively overall English 1 proficiency increased 6 percentage points gaps in math achievement for grades 3-8 between white versus African American students decreased by 5 percentage points and decreased 4 percentage points for Hispanic students <p>In addition CMS 4th and 8th grade average scores in reading and math were higher than the national average on the 2001 NAEP.</p> <p>High and middle schools have curricula that prepare students for career and technical education, honors programs, the opportunity to earn college credit through a community college, advanced placement classes, IB offerings and study abroad programs.</p> <p>Reform focused at lowest achieving/low-performing schools has mixed results. Math Forward program in Title I middle school (7 and 8) changed percentage of students on grade level in 2008 at 65% to 84% on grade level as measured by NC end-of-grade math test.</p> <p>CMS moved out of district improvement under NCLB, CMS schools are ranked in three tiers and receive focused specialized services with Tier I schools receiving most intensive services, Tier II receiving moderate services and Tier III schools receiving standard services.</p> <p>Targeted assistance programs of instructional support coaches are a promising approach for raising student achievement and personalizing student learning.</p> <p>Making student performance data available to students, educators, and parents is under development. Within and across grade levels school teams examine student work through Data Wise process developed at Harvard University. Teams are trained to deeply examine student formative assessment, team-developed common assessments, and student work. Another data tool is EASY Individualized Education Plan (IEP) allowing teachers access to information for students with special needs. Teachers also have access to EASY Personalized Education Plan (PEP) for access to information on students not eligible for IEPs but failing or at risk of failure.</p> <p>Title I schools use Indistar, a system that supports teachers through a continuous cycle of assessment from implementation, to planning to tracking students.</p> <p>An on-line tool for parents is Parent Assistant. This allows parents of students in grades 3-12 access to student grades on quizzes, exams and assignments.</p> <p>CMS has the potential to develop sound systems for communicating performance data to students, educators and parents.</p> <p>Score for this section low high.</p>		
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5
<p>(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Through its publication of its Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, websites, annual budget meetings, BOE sessions open to the public, televised meetings on budgets, and state reports, CMS does a thorough job in job of transparency of its processes, practices, and investments.</p> <p>School level expenditures and actual personnel salaries, for instructional staff, salaries for school level teachers only, and non-personnel expenditures at the school level are available in the budget book details.</p> <p>Score for section high.</p>		
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10
<p>(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>CMS is well positioned to carry out its proposal as it is directly aligned with NC's initiative under the state's Race to the Top Award received in 2010-2011.</p> <p>The model adopted by NC, Career and College : Ready, Set Go!, called READY is a remodeling agenda designed to support students ,</p>		

teachers, and principals so that students graduate from high school career or college ready. The READY model has core areas called "pillars".

Each of the four Pillars directly support and contribute to CMS's proposal.

Pillar 1: Great Teachers and Principals includes measures of student growth as one means of determining educator impact on student learning. Under this Pillar Common Exams will be administered in Fall 2012-13. CMS is the only large district to administer the exams in Spring 2013. Common Exams will be used in 22 high school courses, Science grades 4, 6, and 7, and Social Studies grades 4-8. Funds are needed by CMS to train cadre of teachers to score the Common Exams administered by other teachers.

Pillar 2: Quality Standards and Assessments supports the updating of standards and assessments for the adoption of Common Core and Essential Standards to be implemented in 2012-13. The first year of reporting on the new model is Fall 2014. This new model which calls for improved formative assessments directly supports teachers in addressing student needs throughout the year. Students can use results from tests to explore career options, and educators can use results to determine gaps in learning and address deficits.

Pillar 3: Turnaround of Lowest-Achieving Schools increases support and opportunities for students at the lowest-achieving schools and will align with CMS's goals of personalizing student learning and school redesign.

Pillar 4: Data System to Improve Instruction will provide data systems that support CMS's application by measuring student outcomes, informing educators and stakeholders the best way to deliver services in a coherent pattern.

CMS has the right culture, autonomy and flexibility to implement its goal of personalized learning through flexible use of time, staffing structures, building teams of highly effective educators through alternative routes to teacher certification, innovative use of digital tools, and small schools model to offer specialized learning opportunities.

Letters of support provide strong evidence that CMS has the right components to carry through its proposal.

Score is high.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	7
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(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

CMS began an in-depth process of engaging stakeholders, students, families, teachers and principals prior to the release of the grant guidelines. In the Project L.I.F.T., situated in the West Charlotte corridor, students, families, teachers, principals, community partners, agencies and Philanthropic supporter have met over time since 2010. Five community forums of over 800 participants, four advisory committees to formally engage parents, and school teams have contributed to the educational discussion of educational issues.

The Wraparound Community School model at Reid Park has been engaging stakeholders since 2011. At McClintock Middle school an organization called McClintock Partners in Education brings together faith and community partners who work with students, families and school teams.

Teachers, principals, students, families and other stakeholders were consulted and provided substantial input into the model. Teachers have a vital voice in the planning teams and a Teacher Advisory Group is being formed to ensure teacher voice in developing performance measures and professional development.

CMS's proposal has been shared with BOE members, local mayors, and the state education department. Letters of support substantiate this outreach.

Teacher support was assessed through participating principals sharing the proposed plan with staff and teachers and conducting a vote of support. Vote was overall 71% in favor of the proposal but not 70% for each of the individual schools. Superintendent's Teacher Advisory Council and Charlotte Teachers' Association also had input into the proposal.

A well designed plan to include organizations to support the design, planning and implementation of each school's design is laid out. Defined criteria to select and contract with organizations to serve as implementation partners and standard competitive bid is outlined in the proposal.

CMS has reached out to multiple stakeholders in creating its proposal.

Evidence provided supports a score in medium range.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	5
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(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

CMS conducted a review of the current status of initiatives that impacted teaching, learning, and student supports to identify needs and gaps to determine the extent that the initiatives advanced personalization. Characteristics such as scalability, flexibility afforded to schools with implementation and potential for sustaining reform work were reviewed. Research from school teams, district staff and community partners was factored in to the process .

The focus on math and reading grew out of the examination of disaggregate data for student groups. This was described in Tables 1-2 previously presented. For students to be prepared for college and careers a growth of at least 1.5 years annually needs to occur from elementary through high school. As a result the proposal for highly effective educators in Project 2 described earlier was extended to all participating schools. Project 2 is a school redesign plan. There are 4 approaches that schools may use to implement the redesign: specialization, teacher leaders, distance learning, and blended learning.

A feeder pattern emerged as a strong recommendation to widen the impact and sustainability of the project activities. The three high schools that were selected, East Mecklenburg, Harding and West Charlotte along with their feeder schools represent the range of challenges in personalizing learning for all students from academically struggling students to high achievers.

West Charlotte is a majority-minority high school with a low graduation rate and indicators that the students at West Charlotte are lowest performing in the county.

East Mecklenburg has 60.4% economically disadvantaged students and although achievement and graduation rates are improving, reading scores indicate that only about one-half of the students are reading at or above grade level and gaps exist for student groups, in particular for Blacks, economically disadvantaged, and limited English proficient students.

Harding was changed to a neighborhood school with a partial IB program serving students from two academically struggling high schools. The 2011-12 graduation rate was 92.5%, however overall proficiency decreased from 94.5% for 2010-11 to 64% for 2011-12 and expected growth declined from 63% for 2010-11 to 48% for 2011-12.

The evidence provided for the analysis of needs and gaps supports this high quality plan.

Score high

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	19

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

CMS has presented a detailed, well articulated description of a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the teaching and learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready that includes:

- digital individualized learning plans with diagnostic surveys to capture each student's preferred way of learning
- assessments to target each student's academic needs
- content aligned to the Common Core
- project-based learning around authentic, real world activities
- developing a system of creating a matrix for teaching options and solutions matched to student needs
- designing skill maps aligned with Common Core to generate unique learning plans for students
- frequent assessments to inform students of their progress providing on-going regular feedback
- using a gaming environment to motivate and support students in achieving their personalized learning goals
- Understanding by Design which begins with the end in mind to develop the project-based questions
- making meaning through public presentations and exhibitions which are meaningful and authentic
- an on-line learning platform connecting students through video, virtual field trips, webinars and personal communication systems such as Go to Meeting, Skype and other service providers across the globe allowing access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts and perspectives
- providing time set aside for students to meet on a regular basis (every two weeks) with an advisor to review the individual student's progress against his/her individual learning goals
- developing personalized learning plans that are not tied to grade level but to mastery of specific content
- providing access and support beyond the regular course load during the year, such as in the summer, accelerated courses from colleges, dual credit courses, and advanced placement courses, an e-Learning Academy, access to credit recovery, CTE and vocational learning
- an innovative pilot of redesigning classroom space to provide synchronous, integrated, multiple modalities to meet the diversity of student needs

- partnering with New Classrooms which provides two types of instructional sessions for students: learning sessions that focus on discrete skills, and task-based sessions that allow students to apply learning in real-world contexts
- accommodating high-need students with strategies appropriate to their level with personalized learning goals
- special education teachers in all four schools working closely with parents to ensure that the student's IEP is followed
- an English as a Second Language program supporting students to attain English proficiency and to achieve in the core academic subjects
- a Personalized Education Plan (PEP) used since 2009 for students in grades K-12 that supports teachers in identifying and developing intervention plans for students at risk of failing
- ensuring that mechanisms are in place to provide training for students, school teams, volunteers, parents, and school partners in the robust digital individual learning plan

The score for this section is high.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)

20

18

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

CMS has provided a strong plan to support personalized student learning preparing students who are career and college ready through developing educators who are effective and have the capacity to carry out CMS's proposal by engaging educators in:

- providing professional development for teachers prior to implementation that helps them design detailed school level plans and understand the the four approaches to school team designs
- launching pre-award deep-dive professional development in November and December 2012
- post-award professional development for teachers in a low stakes environment to familiarize them with the digital environment in which they will be working as their changing role in the new environment
- intensive one to two week orientation prior to launch of the projects
- a four week practice to get student and teacher feedback on the implementation and components of the design
- providing common planning time for teams within schools
- on-going job-embedded professional development along with targeted instructional support during year one
- using assessment data about instructional content to provide teachers with real-time data on lesson effectiveness
- a continuous improvement model that provides actionable data on educator effectiveness to guide the improvement process
- re-framing the roles of teachers and school administrators

An highly detailed set of tables are provided which outline the actionable data systems to identify optimal learning approaches that includes the system, available data, and the data range. By moving the available academic and non-academic student data into one location student personalized learning is based on their social, emotional and cognitive needs.

High quality learning resources will be developed to build a repository of skill specific lessons that have been vetted by teachers an demonstrated as successful in developing student skills through the assessment data.

Development of a digital learning tool that will help define what students should learn, and how they should learn it .

Designing an information system to guide the process of continuous improvement model that is high priority for the district. The goal is to improve educator effectiveness, school culture and climate.

Increasing the number of students receiving instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals is based on:

- scaling up proven work and piloting innovations such as restructuring school staffing, reconfiguring learning space, school teams, using technology in place of teacher time
- increasing the number of students who have effective or highly effective teachers the plan is to extend reach of highly effective teachers already in the schools and increasing number of highly effective teachers in the schools
- attracting effective educators is based on using such attractions as being able to work in teams, varying roles for teachers
- retaining teachers through varying roles and differentiated compensation
- developing an in-depth professional development cycle for teachers that would allow mentored practice and feedback along with coaching on-site

Principal turnover in CMS has been relatively on the par with rate statewide, but did exceed the statewide rate in 2011-12: 15% for CMS compared to 11% statewide. To build a strong leadership pipeline for CMS, partnerships are being developed with local universities to train leaders such as the Leaders for Tomorrow with Winthrop University, The School Executive Leadership Academy with McColl School of Business. Both of the programs include a residency/internship component. An additional partnership with the Wallace Foundation is another initiative to develop school leaders.

Identifying highly effective teachers and principals is a daunting task. If it were easy it would be already done. CMS is putting forth a plan to attempt to do this within their district using a multi-facted approach. Score is low high.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	15
<p>(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>CMS has a well defined set of policies and infrastructure to support the delivery of services to all the participating schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project 1 of the proposal describes the administrative/management component of the proposal including a Project Director, Project Evaluator and supporting staff a three tiered system will support the implementation process through zone offices that are the first line of support for areas of school functioning, along with the executive committee of the school district outlined in the organizational chart a secondary tier will be facilitated by an interdepartmental network of central teams-Office of the Deputy Superintendent and the Chief Operating Officer the third tier consists of the school-based teams supported by additional staff designated as lead teachers within schools <p>School leadership teams have sufficient flexibility and autonomy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> schools have implemented a family school model in which students are grouped by skills and abilities teams of high-performing educators are sent to low-performing under the strategic staffing initiative (12 schools of 27 are currently strategically staffed) school improvement plans (SIPs) provide each school with the opportunity to develop strategies for desired outcomes unique to the school principals and school leadership teams develop plans based on both self-evaluation and School Progress Report <p>Students have the opportunity to earn credit based on demonstrated mastery. Descriptions of eight programs including access to on-line classes, web-based programs, 100% on-line programs to acceleration and a mastery approach are described. These provide strong support for the opportunity for students to earn credit in different formats.</p> <p>Students have to opportunity to demonstrate mastery through formative assessments already in place and in the middle school math project, students may request a pre-test if they feel they know the subject.</p> <p>An extensive description is provided for learning resources and instructional practices adaptable for all students including those with special needs (students with disabilities and English Language learners).</p> <p>Score high.</p>		
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8
<p>(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>CMS is committed to ensuring that all participating students, parents and stakeholders have access to necessary tools, content, and learning resources to support the high-quality plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The International Center provides translation of CMS documents as well as interpreters all schools are being equipped with guest wireless access students can bring their own technology to use at school piloting a 1:1 laptop initiative for middle school students equipping students in grades K-1 with laptops partnering with Project L.I.F.T. and Microsoft for a digital inclusion program for families and students in grades 6-12, giving digitally excluded families and students access to tools and training <p>CMS provides a high-quality plan with an extremely detailed description of ensuring technical support for students, parents, educators and other stakeholders including:</p>		

- free access to digital education content
- using Moodle for educational management
- educating parents through Parent University (39,000 parents educated since 2008)
- an automated telephone messaging system for easy communication between teachers and parents
- programs for gang prevention, bullying prevention, character education

CMS is phasing in a Bring Your Own Technology initiative and developing plans to provide professional development on the best practices for use of personal technology in the classroom. Gaggie email access is provided to students. Included is specific description of how personalized learning will be extended through digital platforms. Also included is a description of features to control communication for safety and student protection. A plan for developing and piloting an online data management tool for comprehensive data on at-risk students is described. The management tool will include data including a student's academic performance, behavior, attendance, need for specific services. The tool will be coordinated with other data bases to avoid duplication and leverage local resources to support the tool.

CMS is using the Instructional Improvement System which is part of NCEdCloud. This digital tool provides educators with actionable data to systemically manage ongoing instructional improvement through planning, assessments, and student work. CMS's plan is to integrate other links such content knowledge, item banks, data dashboards as well as other data systems.

Score is high.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	8
<p>(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>CMS describes a plan for monitoring, measuring, and sharing information on implementation including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • beginning year 1 reviewing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats • responsibility of Project Director to manage progress towards objectives • open communication with stakeholders • ongoing planning to make adjustment to work • a Project Evaluator who will work closely with schools and district staff to gather data and measure investments • conduct cost benefit analysis with support of district staff <p>Inadequate addressing of measurements for elements of professional development, technology and staff. The measures to be used need to be identified. Qualitative or quantitative data should be indicated along with how it will be collected. Identifying instruments to collect data and analysis techniques would strengthen this section.</p> <p>Score medium</p>		
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4
<p>(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:</p> <p>Provides a description of ongoing communication with stakeholders. Includes convening stakeholders regularly during year 1 and quarterly in year 2.</p> <p>Updates provided to teacher associations, parents, student groups, district and school staff with annual reports to BOE and larger community.</p> <p>Broad plan for consistent engagement with internal and external stakeholders.</p> <p>More details would make description stronger</p> <p>Score high</p>		
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	5
(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:		

CMS provides detailed charts for measures and student population groups. Measures include educational, behavioral, and family for the K-12 population.

Desired results are clearly defined. Ten population subgroups are identified along with baseline performance data for each sub-group as well as target performance for years and post grant target.

CMS has presented information within the application its rational for selecting the performance measures and how measures will be improved over time. For each of the subgroups, performance measures for content (reading and math), social emotional growth, and behavior indicators have been identified. The detail included in the charts and supported throughout the application support a high score for this section.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2
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(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The evaluation plan is designed as a continuous improvement model that includes measuring student performance, teacher and leadership effectiveness, training and finances. The focus is on a participatory action research methodology which is described as an approach that emphasizes the role of all stakeholders.

As stated in the proposal, the stakeholders will be active partners in each aspect of the evaluation process but the specifics are not included.

The description of the evaluation is vague and needs to be expanded beyond just stating that teacher effectiveness will be examined. How will it be examined? What additional measures will be used?

The evaluation design does not include evaluation of materials or technology.

Plan is not high quality.

Score low

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	10

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Budget and sustainability presentation is comprehensive and identifies all funds that will support the project.

Applicant provides a thoughtful rationale for investments including external support, federal funds, local and state funds that will support the implementation of the project and its parts. Ongoing operational costs are identified and those that will occur after the grant period. One time investments are listed. The overall budget is presented as well as the overall budget for each of the four proposed projects. Detailed project level budget narratives cover each of the four years of the proposal. The budget also clearly identifies costs for program administration, extending the reach of highly effective teachers, pilot projects such as math, and out reach to the community.

Very thorough budget presentation. Score high

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	9
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(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

CMS provides a clear high-quality plan for sustainability of the proposal. Costs in the current year will be covered, current fiscal support will be leveraged, as well as support from current partners. The budget includes 74% for one time costs. Two supplemental budget requests are designed for wider impact. To sustain costs for areas that are demonstrated to have high potential for success with additional time for implementation beyond the grant period, a combination of district, community, business partners, and corporate and private support will be leveraged.

Throughout the proposal and in the support letters, CMS has a high probability of sustainability beyond the grant period.

Score high.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	10

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

CMS has formed strong partnerships with service providing agencies, university researchers, Larry King Center (a children's intermediary that uses data to inform advocacy and guide practice), Communities in Schools, A Child's Place, Thompson's Child and Family Focus, Melange Health Solutions, Charlotte Housing Authority, and the Community Resource Division of Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services.

The Reid Park initiative which began in 2011 is based on a sound civic infrastructure was officially launched in January 2012 is strong evidence of sustainability.

Ten populations have been clearly identified in the charts along with educational and other outcomes, and family and community support results. For example, improvement in student behavior as measured by absences, tardiness, student suspensions, and academic performance in reading and math. Parent support will be measured by attendance at school functions participation in team meetings, reports from parents that their child and they have benefited from the project involvement. Teachers will report that behavior of students has improved.

The district has agreed to provide individualized data on key indicator and principals will support the tracking of indicators. Teachers will report twice a year on students enrolled in initiative and parents/caregivers will agree to participate in the evaluation.

Students with highest needs were targeted and informed by school data: areas targeted were academics, attendance, educational or residential instability, and behavior.

Strategy to scale the model up needs further defining.

Feedback provided from the evaluation findings will provide indicators of strengths and weaknesses that can be utilized by teams to improve results over time.

The underlying premise of the wraparound model of care planning and service/ support is that Child and Family Teams will build on the strengths to develop a comprehensive plan to address the diverse needs of the child and the family. Making the implementation consistent is a critical part of the model.

The plan will put in place Lead Coordinators (8) to manage the model throughout the Harding Schools. The coordinators will oversee the work of coordinating agencies and assess the needs and assets of participating student.

A large scale assessment of the strengths and needs of the feeder schools will be conducted. With the support of the outside university evaluators extensive assessment data will be available in both the aggregate and on individual students.

A solid decision-making process is described that will support the selection, implementation, and evaluation of supports that address the individual needs of participating students: initial screening device, MOUs among partnering service agencies designating number of families that will be part of the agency's case load, student support teams in schools, and consent documents developed for the collection and sharing of information.

Parents and families of participating students are actively engaged in the decision making process and have been involved in all aspects of the process described here and in earlier parts of application.

A critical piece of the partnership's function is the routine assessment using a standard observation form providing detailed feedback to teams and that helps improve team function. The degree of engagement in the planning process and provisions of services maximizes impact.

A table provides the population groups to be served, type of result and performance results expected.

Score high.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

CMS's application has designed its proposed projects to personalize student learning and create environments that provide for the educational, social, and behavioral needs of students across diverse student populations. Students are supported to be college and career ready, have exposure to highly effective teachers and school leaders. Included is a process of leveraging multiple partners to help close achievement gaps, provide services to families, and improve the education system as a whole in the district.

Total	210	182
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Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)

	Available	Score
Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	15

Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

CMS has two Optional Supplemental Funding requests.

Budget 1 is for expanding band width to assist with and build a technology infrastructure that serves the need to gather and use data to to inform instruction.

The funds will be used to assure that all students and families have access to a digital environment that will support personalized learning and expand options for individualizing instruction as well as communication to parents about their child's academic and behavioral development.

Budget is reasonable.

Score 15

Optional Budget Supplement (Scored separately - 15 total points)	15	15
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Optional Budget Supplement Reviewer Comments:

Budget 2 is for Common Exam Scoring.

The funds requested are personnel costs and fringe benefits. A cadre of trained exam scorers are essential to having accurate scores to measure student achievement and effective teachers and administrators.

Score high 15